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from OLC

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18 July 1951

CAPABILITIES OF THE SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY, Supplement to NIE-34, "Position of Spain in the East West Conflict".

Conclusions:

The Spanish Communist Party (PCE) with a total estimated membership of 10-15 thousand is politically ineffectual at this time, due largely to the overwhelmingly anti-Communist sentiments of the Spanish people, Franquists, and anti-Franquists alike. However, it does represent a real potential threat to Spanish capabilities in western defense.

Discussion:

The Communists have recently tried to capitalize on the demoralization produced among the non-Communist leftist opposition forces in Spain by the decision of the western democracies to renew diplomatic relations with the Franco government and by US plans for economic and possibly military aid to Spain. Accordingly, they have invited Spanish Socialists, Anarchists, and leftist republicans to join in a Communist-led "national front" to speed the downfall of Franco, and to undermine any expansion of the Spanish defense effort. However, since all clandestine non-Communist leftist groups abhor Communism virtually as much as they detest the Franco regime, the PCE is accorded little immediate chance of success.

It must be remembered, nevertheless, that the non-Communist leftist elements within Spain have threatened to oppose, with sabotage if necessary, any Spanish defense program under Franco. Although it is not certain that they will carry out this threat, the Communists are bound to exploit to the utmost any anti-western feeling engendered by the inclusion of Franco Spain in any joint western defense effort since, it is claimed, this would in effect consolidate Franco's position against all opposition. With the most efficiently organized group and the best disciplined guerrilla bands within Spain, the PCE could provide ready-made cadres for an immediate expansion of sabotage activities. Although the Spanish army and security forces have thus far been able to cope with communist guerrilla activity, the existing outlaw Communist bands could, in the event of war, be swelled by an estimated 100,000 Communist sympathizers and by a number of the more ardent members of clandestine labor organizations who, despite their hatred of Communism, would feel impelled to join the forces that are most actively engaged in a war against Franco.

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